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for Productive Capacity-Building and Sustainable Development
Eleventh session
Geneva, 30 September–1 October 2024

Report of the Multi-year Expert Meeting on Investment, Innovation and Entrepreneurship for Productive Capacity-building and Sustainable Development on its eleventh session

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, 30 September–1 October 2024



Introduction

The eleventh session of the Multi-Year Expert Meeting on Investment, Innovation and Entrepreneurship for Productive Capacity-building and Sustainable Development was held on 30 September and 1 October 2024 at the Palais des Nations in Geneva.

I. Chair's summary

A. Opening plenary

1. The Deputy Secretary-General of UNCTAD opened the session. The following speakers made opening statements: the representative of Cambodia, speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China; the representative of Bangladesh, on behalf of the Asia-Pacific Group; the representative of the Niger, on behalf of the African Group; the representative of Nepal, on behalf of the least developed countries; the representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean Countries; the representative of Nigeria; the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran; and the representative of Indonesia.

2. In his opening statement, the Deputy Secretary-General of UNCTAD highlighted the critical role of microenterprises and small and medium-sized enterprises in the global economy, and noted the challenges they faced, including impacts from the pandemic, supply chain disruptions, rising energy prices and climate change, which had strained their operations and competitiveness. He emphasized the need for microenterprises and small and medium-sized enterprises to adopt digital technologies and sustainable practices in order to build resilience against shocks and stay competitive and noted that business development services needed to evolve accordingly, to accompany such enterprises and startups. The Deputy Secretary-General reiterated the commitment of UNCTAD to supporting the development of such enterprises and assisting member States with regard to entrepreneurship policies and capacity-building programmes, citing examples from the Empretec and business facilitation programmes. Finally, the Deputy Secretary-General noted that experts at the present session would explore policies that had proved effective in supporting the development and growth of microenterprises and small and medium-sized enterprises and startups; discuss the role of business development services in creating robust entrepreneurship ecosystems, particularly in developing countries; and share best practices that could inform public policy and drive positive change.

3. The Director of the Division on Investment and Enterprise, UNCTAD, presented the background document, titled "Business development services for conducive business ecosystems in support of sustainable development" (TD/B/C.II/MEM.4/31). She stated that microenterprises and small and medium-sized enterprises had a critical role in improving economic, social and environmental conditions in economies. She underscored the importance of the provision of business development services tailored to varying needs and their important contribution to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as the need for the involvement of multiple stakeholders, to create an effective business development services ecosystem. In this regard, policy action was needed, to facilitate the development of a comprehensive and diversified range of business development services and delivery mechanisms, particularly in the light of the current global context, in which rapid technological developments, the need to accelerate the energy transition, the search for solutions to environmental and climate crises and the emergence of new critical skills created new challenges and opportunities for business development services providers. Finally, the Director noted that UNCTAD had nurtured entrepreneurship by leveraging global networks in order to share knowledge and foster skill development among emerging entrepreneurs, through different initiatives, such as digital government platforms for business facilitation and the programme on accounting and sustainability reporting.

4. The keynote speaker, Professor, Social Innovation, and Dean, Executive Master of Business Administration Programme, International Institute for Management Development, emphasized the importance of building bridges between theory and practice and between macro-level policies and the realities faced by entrepreneurs. She noted an initiative led by the International Institute for Management Development that fostered collaboration among the private, public and philanthropic sectors, to finance solutions in fragile settings. Finally, the speaker stressed the need for organizational capacity, to implement innovative financial instruments, and the power of engagement across different sectors, to address global challenges effectively.

5. The representatives of several regional groups emphasized the critical role of microenterprises and small and medium-sized enterprises in driving long-term economic growth and resilience and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, along with the role of business development services in fostering such ecosystems; noted the need for stronger support in overcoming barriers related to regulations, limited financing and market access that hindered the ability of such enterprises to be productive, innovative and competitive; and highlighted the need for improved, tailored support services, to help such enterprises, including among vulnerable groups, adapt to the green and digital transitions and to integrate into global value chains. The representatives of several regional groups noted the need for increased multi-stakeholder cooperation at the international level and support, including through financial resources, technical assistance and peer learning, for microenterprises and small and medium-sized enterprises in developing countries, including those owned and operated by women. A few delegates highlighted the importance of creating an enabling environment for businesses through particular institutional frameworks and dedicated ministries and policies. The representatives of a few regional groups and one delegate stressed the need to foster entrepreneurial skills, particularly among youth. The representatives of a few regional groups and a few delegates highlighted the importance of strategies and policies in addressing challenges with regard to the green and digital transitions and the need for upskilling and reskilling; underscored in this regard the UNCTAD Empretec programme, which provided essential business development services, and the need for exchanges in order to adopt successful models; and expressed support for the continuation of the work on electronic government (e-government) platforms. One delegate noted the need for the expansion and enhancement of such programmes and another delegate highlighted the role of UNCTAD, under the technical assistance pillar of work, in supporting a collaborative approach between the public and the private sectors, to foster the potential of microenterprises and small and medium-sized enterprises.

B. Business development services for conducive business ecosystems in support of sustainable development

(Agenda item 3)

1. Beyond boundaries: The future landscape of businesses

6. During the first informal session, the panellists discussed the trends that reflected the evolving landscape of entrepreneurship, microenterprises and small and medium-sized enterprises and startups. The panel was composed of the following: Minister of Trade, Industry, Regional Integration and Employment, Gambia; Secretary-General, Arab-Swiss Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Director, Unitec, University of Geneva; President, National Institute of Support for Microenterprises and Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises, Angola; Director, Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship.

7. The first panellist noted UNCTAD support in formulating the entrepreneurship strategy of the Gambia and highlighted the need for businesses to adapt to technological advances and consumer demands. He noted the importance of integrating artificial intelligence-related and environmental considerations into business support services, particularly among small and medium-sized enterprises, to address the digital divide and enhance industry transitions. Finally, the panellist suggested making artificial intelligence a mandatory part of school curricula and noted that the support of the Gambia for such changes had led to increased investment.

8. The second panellist detailed businesses development services solutions already being successfully implemented, as follows: incubators and accelerators provided technical and financial support; mentoring and matching with business angels helped in financing and growing businesses; the facilitation of digital payments helped unlock crowdfunding; and remittances and financial technology were considered alternative financing sources. She highlighted that public-private partnerships were good schemes through which to deliver upskilling and reskilling support for technological advancement, since this was one of the main challenges for companies.

9. The third panellist underlined the importance of collaborations between universities, research centres and businesses, to drive innovation. He highlighted the model in Switzerland, which integrated academia with a rich network of partnerships. The panellist stressed that startups and university spinoffs could facilitate technology transfer and the need for clear collaboration terms and royalty frameworks, to enhance this process. Finally, he noted the need for supportive legislation and to adapt collaborations to fit the cultural and developmental stage of a national innovation ecosystem.

10. The fourth panellist presented the developing business support ecosystem in Angola, which comprised a growing national network of incubators, competitions and startup summits as key policy instruments with which to support small businesses, startups and young entrepreneurs.

11. The fifth panellist discussed the social economy as a critical driver for sustainable development, highlighting the blend of traditional and social business models whereby profitability met with positive impacts. He noted the need for policy and financial support for the social and solidarity economy and for measures such as national registries, to identify and leverage social enterprises. Noting the risk of inequality in the capacity to adapt among developing countries, the panellist stated that only 1 per cent of artificial intelligence investment targeted social goods. Finally, to bolster the social economy, he suggested enhancing incentives for funding, expanding educational and research opportunities, promoting social enterprises through procurement and improving impact data collection.

12. During the ensuing discussion, with regard to a query from one delegate on the importance of collaboration with universities and the fact that there was no one-size-fits-all approach for developing countries, one expert emphasized the need for guidelines, to enhance collaboration between universities and the private sector, stressing the need for capacity-building in technology transfer and referring to a World Intellectual Property Organization database of best practices. The representative of one regional group and one delegate highlighted social entrepreneurship and noted models that could be used. A few experts stated that it was important to include the emerging social entrepreneurship in entrepreneurship policies and noted the challenges for small enterprises in many countries in Africa related to rapid changes in consumer preferences and technology, including with regard to gaps in information and communications technology (ICT) infrastructure and issues regarding informality. The experts discussed the adaptability and potential of young people in embracing technological and sustainable practices, although many still lacked essential skills and needed support, including in ICT. The representative of one regional group and one delegate noted the increasing consumer demand for sustainable products, stating that, while sustainability regulations might lead to increased business costs, they were necessary in order to address broader challenges.

2. Small businesses, big impact: Microenterprises, small and medium-sized enterprises and startups for economic development

13. During the second informal session, the panellists presented strategies to foster the provision of business development services and discussed policy interventions that could effectively support the development and growth of microenterprises and small and medium-sized enterprises and startups, taking into consideration adaptation to different national contexts. The panel was composed of the following: Professor, Faculty Research Centre for Entrepreneurship, Nyenrode Business University, Kingdom of the Netherlands; Technical Director, Micro and Small Business Support Service, Brazil; Head, Business Services, Barcelona Activa, Spain; Managing Director, Innobridge, Switzerland.

14. The first panellist highlighted the pivotal role of microenterprises and small and medium-sized enterprises and startups in driving sustainable, inclusive economic growth, noting their contributions to job creation and social development. She discussed how such enterprises disrupted traditional markets and developed new, sustainable ones. The panellist expressed concerns about the digital divide, worsened by inadequate digital skills globally. To mitigate such challenges, she noted the need to create ecosystems that supported innovation and sustainable entrepreneurship; enhance digital skills and improve access to digital resources through “bridgital” clusters; better integrate such enterprises into global value chains; and re-evaluate educational roles in supporting such developments.

15. The second panellist emphasized the critical role of small businesses in Brazil, which included around 24 million formal entities, contributing to both the economy and society, generating 60 per cent of jobs annually and accounting for one third of the gross domestic product of Brazil. The panellist noted that small businesses had a key role in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, through innovation, reduced informality and the promotion of credit access and productive inclusion. The Micro and Small Business Support Service provided a strategic customer relationship approach involving attraction, acquisition, retention and value addition. Finally, the panellist referred to initiatives aimed at greening businesses in urban and resource-rich areas and supporting environmentally sustainable practices and inclusive startups in the Amazon.

16. The third panellist detailed the support strategy for small and medium-sized enterprises in Barcelona, Spain; the city had a knowledge-based economy, whereby such enterprises generated over 90 per cent of economic activity, alongside a startup ecosystem with about 2,000 startups and university networks. She noted that the national law on startups provided tax incentives, to attract companies and investors, and described the work of Barcelona Activa in boosting economic competitiveness and sustaining a diverse economy; key initiatives included digital training for citizens, a government interaction desk and incubation spaces for new companies, as well as free services that included financing advice, with an emphasis on digital adoption and supporting women entrepreneurs, and a strategy that focused on proximity, innovation and equality.

17. The fourth panellist shared insights into fostering sustainable job creation in Switzerland, noting that most new businesses were founded based on skills from previous jobs, often without new technologies. He advocated for reassessing business growth support, emphasizing the need for ecosystems that provided timely access to skills and resources. He noted the challenges faced by small businesses due to the rapid pace of technological development and highlighted the need for strategic resource and talent allocation and for new funding models, to better support entrepreneurial activities. Finally, the panellist emphasized the importance of continuous education and systemic learning, to keep pace with technology, ensuring adaptability and growth in the evolving economic landscape.

18. During the ensuing discussion, with regard to a query from one delegate on how to balance the costs of compliance for informal businesses in policymaking, the extent to which job creation should be linked to entrepreneurship development and small business support and how to collect reliable data, a few experts noted the positive role of mentoring and a supportive culture for entrepreneurship and how, for example, simplifying regulations and reducing bureaucracy had allowed informal workers in Brazil to quickly formalize businesses, at virtually no cost. With regard to a query from one delegate on the role of innovation in entrepreneurship, one panellist stated that, while entrepreneurship could occur without innovation, innovation could significantly enhance entrepreneurship by creating value and jobs. The representative of one regional group noted the challenges in developing a thriving entrepreneurial ecosystem in varied economic and cultural contexts, emphasizing the importance of risk management, diversity, sectoral strengths and financial support; and stressed the critical role of microenterprises and small and medium-sized enterprises in national economic development, noting the challenges brought about by the impacts of the digital and green transitions on business practices. One delegate noted the importance of public and private sector support in ensuring the competitiveness of a vibrant small and medium-sized business sector and the need for efforts to remove trade barriers and better integrate microenterprises and small and medium-sized enterprises into global and regional

value chains. Some delegates commended the Empretec programme for its role in enhancing managerial and technical skills among small and medium-sized enterprises and underscored the need for more networking between Empretec centres, to support the further expansion of the programme.

3. Charting the course for sustainable business futures

19. During the third informal session, the panellists discussed how business development services were evolving in order to adapt to the twin transition of environmental sustainability and digitalization and technological advancement. The panel was composed of the following: Associate Professor, Economics and Management of Innovation, Chair of Policy and Sustainability, Federal Institute of Technology, Switzerland; Ambassador, Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Chile to the World Trade Organization; Assistant General Manager, Economic Zones Association, Nigeria; Chief Executive Officer, Moai Investments, Brazil; Adviser, Orange Corners, Enterprise Agency, Kingdom of the Netherlands; and Chief Executive Officer, Co-Founder, Samudra Oceans, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

20. The first panellist discussed the role of research in helping businesses transition to sustainability and resilience. He highlighted several initiatives, including the European Union calculator for decarbonization pathways; the use of data science to assess the economic impact of energy efficiency in real estate; and the digitalization of water utilities, to reduce waste. The panellist emphasized the challenges faced by microenterprises and small and medium-sized enterprises in meeting sustainability regulations, noting that digital tools could help level the playing field by enabling smaller firms to comply. Finally, he stressed the importance of ensuring that the benefits of digitalization reached businesses beyond urban centres.

21. The second panellist discussed the focus in Chile on sustainable microenterprises and small and medium-sized enterprises, stressing the need for digital tools with which to reduce gaps between companies and facilitate energy efficiency improvements. The Government had implemented programmes to digitalize such enterprises in order to increase their digital maturity. The panellist emphasized the importance of public policies in supporting such enterprises, which accounted for 99 per cent of companies in Chile and generated 70 per cent of employment, and highlighted the challenges faced by such enterprises, such as low productivity, limited innovation and lack of access to funding, alongside the use of artificial intelligence tools to help diagnose and anticipate business needs. Finally, the panellist noted that a collaborative approach between the public and private sectors was essential in promoting entrepreneurship and innovation.

22. The third panellist emphasized the challenges related to entrepreneurship, noting the low survival rate of businesses and the difficulties in navigating complex regulations. She highlighted the opportunities presented by the twin transition of sustainability and digitalization, stressing the importance of digital literacy, access to finance and the digitalization of processes, particularly among young entrepreneurs. The panellist noted, however, that many countries lacked the basic infrastructure needed to leverage artificial intelligence and the need for improvements to support its adoption. Special economic zones were key in boosting exports, attracting foreign direct investment, creating jobs and promoting digital transformation, particularly among youth in Nigeria, where partnerships, mentorship programmes and research and development resources made special economic zones attractive. Finally, the panellist referred to the African Continental Free Trade Area Agreement, noting that its implementation reduced tariffs and drove investment, yet further investment and collaboration were needed with special economic zones in order to unlock its full potential.

23. The fourth panellist discussed fostering sustainability among microenterprises and small and medium-sized enterprises in Brazil, emphasizing their diverse needs and the importance of a sustainable approach that included financial, economic and social sustainability. He stressed that different stages of business required tailored approaches, with business development services, academia and other stakeholders each having a role in instilling green practices. Linking small businesses to export promotion programmes, access to funding and supply chain networks was essential in promoting sustainability. The

panellist highlighted the importance of an appropriate diagnostic process in selecting suitable entrepreneurial profiles, suggesting that early-stage businesses might require gamified solutions and training and that more advanced entrepreneurs could benefit from consultation services and group training.

24. The fifth panellist detailed an initiative of the Enterprise Agency, Kingdom of the Netherlands, for young entrepreneurs, focused on a triple-helix approach that combined the Government, the private sector and academia, to promote entrepreneurship and innovation. He discussed workshops on regenerative and circular economies and the importance of training angel investors in evaluating startups. Finally, the panellist noted successful examples of innovation funds that had helped startups build prototypes and strengthened entrepreneurial ecosystems.

25. The sixth panellist discussed how robotics and artificial intelligence were used in the blue economy to support decarbonization efforts by leveraging the ocean's potential, such as by cultivating seaweed as part of carbon-capture initiatives. She emphasized the importance of mentorship, connections to finance and engagement with local communities. Finally, the panellist highlighted the use of angel investors to support green businesses, stressing the difficulties faced by entrepreneurs in accessing funding for sustainability-focused ventures.

26. During the ensuing discussion, with regard to entrepreneurship ecosystems, a few delegates emphasized the need to bridge the skill gap among entrepreneurs, particularly women and youth, in the light of the twin transition; noted that special economic zones could better facilitate the digital transformation for youth-led businesses; and underscored the challenges posed by restrictions on movement and the need for resilient infrastructure, to support entrepreneurship. A few delegates noted the need to support youth entrepreneurship and address the challenges of unfair competition faced by small businesses and addressed how business development services could improve market access for entrepreneurs. Some delegates and panellists agreed on the importance of public-private partnerships, infrastructure development and digital skills, as essential components in the success of microenterprises and small and medium-sized enterprises and startups in order to drive inclusive and sustainable economic growth. Finally, the panellists emphasized that business development services had a critical role in facilitating effective fundraising strategies, to enhance financial access for such enterprises and startups.

4. Innovate to elevate: Tackling entrepreneurial novelties with upskilling and reskilling

27. During the fourth informal session, the panellists discussed that business development services needed to adapt to the twin transition, emphasizing the need for upskilling and reskilling among microenterprises and small and medium-sized enterprises and startups, addressing the effects of new technologies and sustainability on entrepreneurship, exploring targeted services for skill development and presenting collaborative strategies for addressing challenges in developing countries. The panel was composed of the following: Executive Manager, Enterprise Development Division, Small Enterprise Development Agency, South Africa; Adviser, Commonwealth Secretariat; Director, Policy and Research, Global Entrepreneurship Network; Head, Business Development and Partnerships, Ship Shap, Kenya; and Director, Strategic Communications, Youth Business International.

28. The first panellist highlighted the role of the Small Enterprise Development Agency in South Africa in supporting small businesses through the provision of offices, incubators and partnerships, focusing on inclusive growth in the digital and ICT sectors and reducing service fragmentation. She highlighted efforts to address challenges in the informal sector and digital development, such as by creating digital hubs and one-stop shops for young entrepreneurs and enhancing market access, as well as through initiatives such as Empretec, to boost innovation and capacity, aiding underrepresented groups such as women.

29. The second panellist emphasized the importance of innovation, upskilling and reskilling in boosting entrepreneurship and economic resilience in the Commonwealth, particularly through initiatives such as the Commonwealth Artificial Intelligence Academy, which targeted youth in small island developing States. He advocated for cohesive policies,

strong partnerships across sectors and practical measures such as networking and apprenticeships, to bridge skill gaps, linking education directly to labour market needs, and highlighted collaborative efforts with UNCTAD on *Policy Guide on Youth Entrepreneurship*.

30. The third panellist detailed global initiatives such as Global Entrepreneurship Week, aimed at strengthening entrepreneurial ecosystems, and emphasized the need for public sector involvement, to enhance collaboration and ensure transparency. He highlighted challenges in updating skills in emerging industries and the need for Governments and the private sector to be adaptive and responsive, noting that poorly allocated resources and designs could hinder ecosystem growth.

31. The fourth panellist stressed the critical role of upskilling and reskilling in supporting emerging businesses and spurring economic growth, noting the significant skill gap among 60 per cent of startups in Africa and highlighting in this regard the UNCTAD e-founders fellowship programme. He underscored the importance of public–private partnerships and international collaboration in reskilling programmes, including matchmaking and government-supervised innovation sandboxes, to enhance entrepreneurial ecosystems and help entrepreneurs scale their impacts.

32. The fifth panellist detailed global initiatives designed to empower young entrepreneurs, particularly those from disadvantaged or rural areas, emphasizing a holistic approach that integrated technical support, soft skills and resource access. She highlighted the role of inclusive entrepreneurship policies and the potential of youth-driven innovation in fields such as digital technology, artificial intelligence and climate action, providing an example of an entrepreneur in Nigeria who had developed climate-smart agricultural technology, to demonstrate the need to extend such services to marginalized communities.

33. During the ensuing discussion, the panellists underlined the need to develop critical skills in a business environment shaped by the twin transition; highlighted the importance of tailored business development services, mentorship and certifications; discussed aligning government policies, enhancing data-sharing and fostering stakeholder coordination, to support skill development and sustainability practices, while addressing challenges in public–private partnerships; expressed concerns about the difficulties faced by small businesses with regard to complex trade agreements; and stressed the need for mentorship programmes, to counter brain drain and attract diaspora entrepreneurs. With regard to a query from one delegate on the need for strategies that facilitated access to the business community and effectively supported individuals with disabilities, those in remote areas and women entrepreneurs in scaling up ventures, the panellists highlighted the value of tailored and inclusive programmes for vulnerable groups, stressing the importance of integration into the mainstream business community, to foster scaling and growth; underscoring the benefits of community and peer support among entrepreneurs, as shown by various programmes in developed countries; noting that tailored coaching often provided the most substantive growth; and addressing the effective design and execution of apprenticeship programmes, which should offer a path to long-term employment and include various incentives, to encourage participation. One delegate noted the effectiveness of peer networks among young entrepreneurs, noting an example of a startup finance event in Finland at which participants had valued the ability to connect, exchange ideas and support each other; and questioned whether there might be greater benefits in allowing young entrepreneurs to solve problems through such networks, without direct intervention from public authorities. Another delegate addressed key policy interventions that Governments could implement, to support microenterprises and small and medium-sized enterprises and help them grow, particularly in response to significant global economic shocks. One delegate highlighted the challenge of managing multiple partners and the resulting duplicative efforts in the same intervention areas in developing countries; noted the need for improved collaboration among service providers through policy coordination and effective resource allocation; and stressed the importance of apprenticeship programmes that included paths to actual employment opportunities.

C. Conclusion

34. The Chair noted that the experts had reached consensus on the importance of business development services in strengthening business ecosystems and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. The informal sessions had highlighted the significance of technological advancements and sustainability in reshaping business models, and the need for microenterprises and small and medium-sized enterprises and startups to integrate sustainability and digitalization. The discussions had served to underscore the following: the need for affordable, accessible business development services and a supportive environment for such transformations; the need to adapt solutions to national contexts and tailor policy actions; the importance of digital skills, the use of artificial intelligence for societal benefits and enhanced university and business collaborations for technology transfer; the potential of the social economy to drive sustainable development and the pivotal role of youth in adopting sustainable practices; the critical role of microenterprises and small and medium-sized enterprises in job creation, social development and sustainable market formation; and the need for enhanced digital skills and broader access to digital services, to integrate microenterprises and small and medium-sized enterprises into global value chains. The Chair noted that discussions had addressed the following: challenges in areas such as access to credit by informal businesses and the importance of diversity, inclusion and sectoral clustering; the importance of policymaking, to guide entrepreneurs in digitalization, and online platforms, which could facilitate access to information; and the three elements of the sustainability approach, namely, environmental, social and financial elements. Finally, the Chair noted that discussions had served to underscore that business development services could be strengthened through partnerships between public institutions, the private sector and academia and that doing so was critical in addressing digital and sustainability-related challenges.

35. In her concluding remarks, the Director of the Division on Investment and Enterprise stressed the commitment of UNCTAD to building bridges between various stakeholders and noted key topics requiring further attention. She referred to the update of the entrepreneurship policy framework. The inclusion of vulnerable groups in entrepreneurship had been discussed, and the Director noted the ongoing collaboration with the Commonwealth Secretariat to update *Policy Guide on Youth Entrepreneurship*; UNCTAD was available to review and develop dedicated policy frameworks for migrants and the formalization of businesses. She referred to gender policies and awareness-raising by UNCTAD with regard to women entrepreneurs, including through the women in business awards. Ongoing implementation of the Empretec programme and the business linkages initiative included the 2.0 plan focused on digitalization and new training curricula, such as a workshop on financial technology, and UNCTAD was also working on e-government platforms and new sustainability reporting standards in view of the sustainability transition. Finally, the Director noted the nexus between investment and enterprise and the importance of the investment environment and stated that the outcomes of the present discussions would also be considered at a ministerial-level meeting to be held during the World Investment Forum in 2025.

II. Organizational matters

A. Election of officers

(Agenda item 1)

36. At its opening plenary meeting on 30 September 2024, the Multi-Year Expert Meeting on Investment, Innovation and Entrepreneurship for Productive Capacity-building and Sustainable Development elected Ms. Dato' Nadzirah Osman (Malaysia) as its Chair and Ana Libertad Guzmán Villeda (Guatemala) as its Vice-Chair-cum-Rapporteur.

B. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

(Agenda item 2)

37. Also at its opening plenary meeting on 30 September 2024, the Multi-Year Expert Meeting on Investment, Innovation and Entrepreneurship for Productive Capacity-building and Sustainable Development adopted the provisional agenda for the session (TD/B/C.II/MEM.4/30). The agenda was thus as follows:

1. Election of officers.
2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work.
3. Business development services for conducive business ecosystems in support of sustainable development.
4. Adoption of the report of the meeting.

C. Adoption of the report of the meeting

(Agenda item 4)

38. At its closing plenary meeting on 1 October 2024, the Multi-year Expert Meeting on Investment, Innovation and Entrepreneurship for Productive Capacity-building and Sustainable Development authorized the Vice-Chair-cum-Rapporteur, under the authority of the Chair, to finalize the report on its eleventh session after the conclusion of the meeting.

Annex

Attendance*

1. Representatives of the following States members of the Conference attended the session:

Angola	Iraq
Antigua and Barbuda	Kenya
Argentina	Lesotho
Azerbaijan	Libya
Bangladesh	Malaysia
Barbados	Micronesia (Federated States of)
Brazil	Mongolia
Cabo Verde	Morocco
Cameroon	Nepal
Chile	Niger
China	Nigeria
Congo	Oman
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Russian Federation
Egypt	Samoa
Ethiopia	South Africa
Finland	Sri Lanka
Gabon	State of Palestine
Gambia	Thailand
Guatemala	Togo
Holy See	Tunisia
Honduras	Türkiye
Indonesia	United Arab Emirates
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)
	Zambia

2. The following intergovernmental organization was represented at the session:
Commonwealth Secretariat
3. The following United Nations office was represented at the session:
United Nations Office at Geneva
4. The following specialized agency was represented at the session:
International Fund for Agricultural Development
5. The following non-governmental organizations were represented at the session:
General category
Arab-Swiss Chamber of Commerce and Industry
International Network for Standardization of Higher Education Degrees

* This attendance list contains registered participants. For the list of participants, see TD/B/C.II/MEM.4/INF.11.